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DAWN

Warrants out for arrest of eight senior PTI leaders in terrorism case

Court issues non-bailable warrants for Gandapur in audio leak case

By Malik Asad

ISLAMABAD: The Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) has issued arrest warrants for eight PTI leaders, including senior party figures Asad Qaiser, Shibli Faraz, Omar Ayub and Ali Nawaz Awan, in a case registered under terrorism charges, after they failed to appear despite repeated summons.

Expressing displeasure over their continued absence, ATC Judge Tahir Abbas Sipra ordered their arrest and directed the authorities concerned to produce them before the court by November 11.

The hearing was subsequently adjourned.

According to court records, the case was registered by the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) under relevant sections of the Anti-Terrorism Act. The accused are alleged to have been involved in activities falling within the scope of terrorism-related offences.

Audio leak case

In a separate case, Additional District and Sessions Judge Nasruminallah Baloch issued non-bailable arrest warrants for PTI leader and former Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief minister Ali Amin Gandapur in an audio leak case.

The judge expressed displeasure over Mr Gandapur's failure to appear for indictment proceedings, noting that neither he nor his legal counsel attended the hearing.

As a result, the indictment could not be carried out. The court adjourned the matter until December 5 and directed the police to arrest and produce him on the next hearing date.

The case against Mr Gandapur was registered at Golra police station after an alleged audio leak surfaced in which he was purportedly heard asking about the number of weapons, licences and people available for a PTI protest.

The recording reportedly prompted an investigation into the nature and intent of the discussion.

SIKH devotees gather around a bus carrying the Guru Granth Sahib, the Sikh holy book, during a religious procession on the occasion of the birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev, the founder of Sikhism, in Nankana Sahib, on Wednesday. A day earlier, Pakistan welcomed jubilant Sikh pilgrims from India, in the first major crossing since deadly clashes in May closed the land border between the nuclear-armed neighbours.—M.Arif / White Star

Seven die in highway crashes

Gas cylinder explosion injures four

By Abdul Wahid Shahwani and Behram Baloch

KHUZDAR: Seven people died and four were injured on Wednesday in accidents on two separate highways in Balochistan, one of which involved a passenger coach erupting in flames after hitting a gas tanker, killing five people inside, according to police.

The deadliest incident occurred on the Makran Coastal Highway near Kund Malir when a passenger coach heading to Gwadar from Karachi collided head-on with a LPG bowser, highway police said. Both vehicles caught fire following the collision.

Police said five passengers on the bus burned to death after being trapped inside the flaming wreckage. Two other passengers sustained burn injuries.

Rescue workers rushed to the scene and saved many passengers by breaking the coach's windows, while others jumped from the burning vehicle to save themselves, police said.

"Despite efforts of the rescue workers, five people travelling in the coach lost their lives," said Lyari SHO Abdul Jaleel Soomro. The bodies and the injured were moved to a nearby health facility.

Mr Soomro added that fire tenders failed to control the blaze, which resulted in both vehicles being completely destroyed. The victims from the fire could not be immediately identified because their bodies were burned beyond recognition.

Meanwhile, a separate accident on the Quetta-Karachi National Highway in the Sangdas area of Kalat district left two people dead and two others injured.

Levies officials said a speeding car bound for Quetta struck a motorcycle, killing two riders. The deceased were identified as Abdul Qudoos and Sajjad Ali. The injured were identified as Muhammad Ismail and Muhammad Afzal.

Gas cylinder blast injures 4

Seperately, four people, including a man and his three sons, were severely injured in a gas cylinder explosion at their residence in Usta Muhammad district on Wednesday, officials said.

The powerful blast not only injured the homeowner but also caused significant damage to the house and shattered windows in nearby homes. Authorities quickly responded to the incident, transporting the injured to the district hospital.

The victims were identified as Munir Ahmed and his sons, Badar Munir, Sarfraz Munir, and Hussain Munir.

Due to the severity of their injuries, they were later transferred to Larkana for further medical treatment.

Ali Jan Mangi also contributed to this report

NHA chief removed over 'wrongdoing' in Carec project

By Syed Irfan Raza

ISLAMABAD: A couple of days after an inquiry report on alleged irregularities in awarding the Rs170 billion Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation (Carec) Tranche-III project was submitted to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, National Highway Authority (NHA) Chairman Sheheryar Sultan was removed and directed to report to the Establishment Division.

Member administration of NHA, Omar Saeed Chaudhri, has also been repatriated to his parent department, the Ministry of Defence.

The Establishment Division issued two separate notifications regarding the removal of the NHA chairman and the repatriation of the member to the Ministry of Defence.

When contacted, the NHA spokesman said no one in the NHA and the Ministry of Communication was aware of the reason behind the chairman's sudden removal. "The chairman worked in the office today (Wednesday) till 6pm, and the decision came in the night that stunned all in the NHA," he added.

The removal of the chairman is believed to be the fall of the biggest wicket in the NHA amid the Carec controversy, as before this development, PM Shehbaz had already suspended eight senior officials of the NHA for being involved in irregularities in the award of Carec Tranche-III project, including ghost tendering, by the authority.

PM extends GB chief judge's tenure for another three years

By Jamil Nagri

GILGIT: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has extended the tenure of Chief Judge of Gilgit-Baltistan Supreme Appellate Court Sardar Muhammad Shamim Khan for three more years.

A notification issued by GB Council in Islamabad on Tuesday said: "In exercise of powers conferred under Article 75(5) of the Government of Gilgit-Baltistan Order, 2018, the Prime Minister of Pakistan/Chairman of Gilgit-Baltistan Council, on the advice of Governor of Gilgit-Baltistan, has been pleased to appoint Justice Sardar Muhammad Shamim Khan as the Chief Judge of the Supreme Appellate Court, Gilgit-Baltistan, with effect from November 5 till attaining the age of 70 years in terms of Article 75(8) of the GB Order 2018."

The three-year tenure of Chief Judge Shamim Khan ended on November 4.

Meanwhile, GB Chief Minister Haji Gulbar Khan has moved a summary of eight candidates for their appointments on two vacant positions in the GB Supreme Appellate Court.

PTI demands KP chief minister's meeting with Imran in jail

• Afridi warns proposed 27th Amendment will undermine provincial autonomy; vows to take all steps to resist legislation • Says any cut in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's 9.4pc share in NFC award unacceptable

By Ikram Junaidi

ISLAMABAD: The PTI parliamentary party on Wednesday unanimously passed a resolution calling for the arrangement of a meeting between Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi and incarcerated former prime minister Imran Khan, after the chief minister was reportedly denied access on four occasions despite directions issued by the Islamabad High Court (IHC).

The resolution, which was later submitted to the National Assembly Secretariat, claimed that Mr Khan is the head of Pakistan's largest political party and that it is the constitutional and democratic right of the KP chief minister to meet him in Adiala jail.

Members of the parliamentary party demanded that the IHC's orders be implemented, terming the continued denial a violation of democratic norms and parliamentary mandate.

KP Chief Minister Sohail Afridi was present during the meeting.

Speaking to media persons, Mr Afridi warned that the proposed 27th Constitutional Amendment would amount to an attack on provincial autonomy.

He said that the KP government would take all possible steps to resist what he described as an attempt to roll back powers guaranteed to provinces under the Constitution.

He stated that the proposed amendment was "nothing but an encroachment on provincial rights" and that it would not be tolerated at any cost.

He added that PTI considered itself the guardian of the Constitution and would continue to protect it.

KP CM to visit jail again today

Responding to questions about his repeated attempts to meet the PTI founder in jail, Mr Afridi expressed disappointment that the IHC's facilitation orders had not been implemented and said his democratic right had been violated.

He announced that he would visit Adiala jail on Thursday (today), noting that meetings with Mr Khan were officially allowed on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

About the NFC Award, Mr Afridi said that KP's share of 19.4 per cent must not be reduced.

He argued that KP had rendered the greatest sacrifices in the fight against terrorism, with many of its residents martyred, and that decreasing the province's financial share would amount to ignoring those sacrifices.

Post on Imran's X account

Meanwhile, a post issued from Imran Khan's account on the social media platform X, reportedly based on comments shared by his sister, claimed that the rule of law no longer prevailed in the country. It remains unclear who currently operates Mr Khan's account; however, he has never publicly disassociated himself from posts made in his name.

The post described the current leadership as presiding over a period of "oppression" and alleged that incidents such as those of May 9, 2023, and the recent events in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Muridke represented abuses of state authority.

In a message directed at supporters, the PTI founder stated that a nation which embraces the principle of "freedom or death" cannot be stopped from attaining true independence.

He said that legal counsel Salman Akram Raja would transmit all party-related instructions and ensure their implementation.

PTI to oppose 27th Amendment

Separately, PTI Central Information Secretary Sheikh Waqas Akram reaffirmed that the party would go to any extent to block the proposed 27th Constitution Amendment.

He alleged that a non-representative government was pushing the amendment to weaken provincial autonomy, politicise state institutions, curtail media freedom, restrict judicial independence, and concentrate power.

He said the PTI would not allow the government to undo provincial rights, undermine parliamentary authority, or compromise on judicial oversight, stating that such measures would be unacceptable.

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